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TO : Department of State

745h.00/8-2550

FROM : LAGOS 106 August 25, 1950

XR 845h.413

245h.11

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REF: CONDES 75, August 10, 1950 and Ch. P. 1445 Note 2, FSR

SUBJECT: Baptist Centennial, and Summary of Consul General Stanton's Speech

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As reported in despatch No. 75 of August 10, 1950, I made arrangements to attend the Baptist Centennial at Abeokuta, over 60 miles north of Lagos, on August 19, 1950 and accepted the invitation of the Governor of Nigeria (Sir John MACPHERSON) to accompany him.

Parenthetically, the expression on page 3 of despatch No. 75 under reference that the Centennial would be a commemoration "of the establishment of the first Mission in the interior of the country when a brave American representing the Southern Baptists opened a station" may have been misleading. It was not the first mission of any faith established in the hinterland of Nigeria but it was the first mission of the American Southern Baptist creed.

About two days before the Centennial a group of the Baptist leaders called at the Consulate General and asked me to make a short talk in view of the fact that they had also asked the Governor to do the same.

The meeting was a garden party on extensive lawns of the American Baptist Mission, a very attractive spot, and there were perhaps 150 people present, mostly Americans, but there were some British officials, a few British missionaries and about a dozen Africans interested in missionary work, including several ordained clergymen.

My own talk was quite informal and extemporaneous; it included the following points:

Thanks were given to the Chairman, Ira N. PATTERSON, an American, who had just been accorded in absentia the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) by his alma mater in the United States, for his invitation to the Consul General as the American representative in Nigeria.

The welcome of the American community there present was expressed to His Excellency the Governor.

Reference was made to the Centennial as commemorating a mission established under arduous circumstances that warranted a tribute to the founder for his courage, imagination and

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resourcefulness.

Brief discussion was made of the outstanding work that missionaries have done in Nigeria, particularly with regard to churches, schools and hospitals, pointing out that it would be difficult to imagine what this country would have been if it had not been for private activities even though there have been Government encouragement and assistance, and the widespread need for vocational education and the extensive requirements in regard to health facilities, including everyday substitutes of the types that might be developed by mission organizations were mentioned.

Mention was made of the American interest in Nigeria, pointing out that in the United States there are many religions and referring to the separation of Church and State, but saying that Americans naturally are interested in the extension of Western Christian Civilization.

American racial problems in regard to the Negro minority were touched upon as being of distinct interest to Nigeria, saying that America has not found all the answers but is making marked progress towards racial cooperation and that Americans hope for extensive social development in Nigeria as well as elsewhere in West Africa as being in the interest of Americans as well as in that of the inhabitants of the West African territories.

A few words were said about the President's Point Four Program - there was not time enough for a comprehensive survey - explaining that it was an American export of "Know How" to underdeveloped areas based on requests from and assistance by such areas and might be likened to a practical form of present United States Government activity akin to that of American missionaries in their private fields; in passing, it was stated that of course any possible relation of the Point Four Program to Nigeria would have to be discussed with good British friends in this territory and with the Government of the United Kingdom as Nigeria is a part of the British Commonwealth.

The gathering was assured that it could count upon American friendly and cooperative interest in the people of Nigeria.

With brief reference to Korea, it was said that basically, as far as international affairs are concerned, the United States relies upon a campaign for truth throughout the world.

The talk closed with a salute to the founder of the mission and a salute to those there gathered who were entitled to be recognized as carrying on the founder's noble work.

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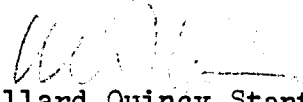
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It may be added that the fact that the Governor and I visited this Centennial meeting together was really appreciated by the gathering, both by the British and by the Americans.

As for the Governor's speech, he paid tribute to Anglo-American Cooperation, discussed missionary work in this country, giving some statistics, and assured the missionaries that they could count upon the Government of Nigeria for support in their work.

American missionaries who had come from the United States for the Centennial as mentioned in despatch No. 75 of August 10, 1950 gave brief speeches.

In summary, the meeting was undoubtedly a success and a worthwhile example of Anglo-African-American cooperation.


Willard Quincy Stanton
American Consul General

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